

# The Beacon

## ZOAR CHURCH PARISH NEWS



*A Beacon of Hope on the North Shore*

### Old Old Stories

***Of Forgotten Tales From the Old Testament***

**Upcoming Messages**

**By Pastor Daren Blanck**

There are some great stories in the Old Testament. There is adventure and intrigue, there is bravery in the face of impossible odds, there is sorrow and quiet contemplation - stories of real people facing real-life situations that often seem pretty similar to the issues we face today.

Some of the “heroes” of the Bible we know well - Joseph, Moses, David, and Daniel. Even Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are pretty well known, considering they only get one chapter! We can’t cover every story in the Old Testament in just a couple of months, but we’re going to examine a few of the less well known ones that have big punch lines.

**April 23: How to Change the World - The Story of Abraham**

Abraham was looking forward to finishing his career running the family idol shop on Ur’s Main Street when out of the blue God called him to up and move to a foreign land and change the world. How is God calling you to change the world? You might just be surprised! *(From Genesis 12-25)*

**May 7: Wrestling with God - The Story of Jacob**

Sometimes we make out Bible characters to be squeaky clean and holy when some of them were anything but. Jacob stole his brother’s birthright, had difficulty in marriage, showed favoritism to his kids, and wrestled with God. His story is proof positive that God’s love is big and he can do big things in your life too! *(From Genesis 25-35)*

**May 14: Laying it on the Line - The Story of Ruth**

Letting go of our fears about the future can be one of the most difficult things to do. This mother’s day we’ll examine one of the often overlooked women in the Old Testament. Ruth’s choice of loyalty over fear challenges us in an uncertain world! *(From the Book of Ruth)*

**May 21: Finishing Well - The Story of Solomon**

Rising to great fame and fortune, but racking up legacy crippling mistakes along the way, the story of Solomon, the richest and most powerful king of Israel is a lesson in not just running the race, but finishing well. What can Solomon’s story teach us about family and community in 2017? *(From 1 Kings 1-11)*

**Missed a Sunday? Past messages are online at:**  
[zoarchurch.org/worship-3/sermon-archives](http://zoarchurch.org/worship-3/sermon-archives)

**May 28: Whom do You Serve? - The Story of Elijah**

Elijah spoke truth to power in an age of corruption. He stood for justice, mercy, and turning the nation of Israel from the idols of their own creation back to the God who loved them. Yet Elijah’s life went from emotional highs to near suicidal lows. Any of this sound familiar? *(From 1 Kings 17-22)*

Christians understand that while these stories contain truths on their own, they also point the way to the teachings, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you’re new to the Bible or you haven’t opened yours in a long time, this series will be a great way to begin exploring the depths of this amazing book. If you don’t have a Bible, we’ll give you one for free when you join us for worship.

Worship begins each Sunday at 9:30. There are treats, juice and coffee at 10:40. Come as you are. Kids welcome. I think you will find we are a warm, inviting, down to earth community and we’d love for you to join us!

### Birch Grove Good News Club

***Learns Some Old Old Stories Too!***



Good News Club Meets every Wednesday at 3:15!

## Cook County Food Shelf

~March Mission Project~



During the month of March, our mission was the Cook County Food Shelf. The Cook County Food

Shelf operates out of the First Congregational Church at Third Avenue and Second Street in Grand Marais. Donations of nonperishable foods can be dropped off at the Cook County Food Shelf at the First Congregational Church. If you want to volunteer time, there is always a task to be done—unloading deliveries, packing boxes, or helping with distribution. If you would like more information about volunteering, contact Gwen Lenz at (218) 387-9860.

## Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge

~April Mission Project~

Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge has been working for nearly 30 years to help teens and adults struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. Their “mission is to assist teens and



Mn Adult & Teen Challenge

adults in gaining freedom from chemical addictions and other life controlling problems by addressing their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.” They are one of the largest, most effective, and most affordable programs in the nation with campuses in Twin Cities, Brainerd, Duluth, Rochester, and Buffalo, Minnesota. They offer short-term, long-term, outpatient, and teen programs. Through their programs they work with clients to uncover the sources of their addictive tendencies and create new patterns to replace old ones. They also work in the community with their prevention program to educate people about the drug situation in their area and the dangers of using drugs. Today they are able to serve more than 600 people across their ten locations, and are looking to the future of creating new program options and locations. The Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge Choir will be leading our worship on Sunday April 30.

## Serving our Seniors in Nursing Care

Zoar Church will be hosting the worship service at Veterans Home in Silver Bay on **Sunday April 9** and **Sunday May 7** at 3:00. You are welcome to join us.

## A Modern Day Pilgrimage

By Tom Perusse

*Why go to a war torn region of the world to vacation? Who wants to be a tourist in a region that is known to originate, train, and export terrorists? Maybe that’s why Suz and I never had an overwhelming desire to visit the Holy Lands of Israel and Palestine, the West Bank and Samaria.*

*Don’t we believe in the trinity of One God who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent? He is God, the One who is with us whether we are skiing the Rockies or traversing the Sahara Desert on a camel. I guess you don’t need to go to the Middle East to believe in Jesus Christ. However, now that we have been there I think the trip has focused our faith and broadened our understanding of the Bible geographically, historically, and culturally. Putting actual biblical places together with times and people of the Bible, (kings, prophets, apostles, other saints, and of course, our Lord), who walked the same hills and vales that we did, opens our minds to the reality of it all. I think we can now study His Word with more clarity and insight.*

*Was the trip relaxing? Not on your life! Our knowledgeable Jewish guide, taskmaster Shraga Ben Yosef, spoke several languages and insisted we depart early most mornings by 7AM enabling us to see numerous sites each day. This is after eating a full breakfast of fresh fruits, vegetables, fish, meats, eggs, pancakes, coffee (of course), pomegranate juice, and, did I forget an assortment of cheeses - all set in a buffet, (or smorgasbord, for Norski’s). Balancing our guide extraordinaire was our driver, Adnan Kawasme, a Muslim Palestinian Arab who, I swear, was a retired ‘Formula-One’ race driver. He drove that Mercedes tour bus into the tightest places, within inches, and roared past BMW’s on the expressways.*

*So what kept us so busy and “dead to the world” by nightfall? Well, Here goes! We visited: The Ruins of CAESAREA, the Roman city built by Herod the Great on the Mediterranean Sea where Paul was imprisoned for two years; The HERODIAN, the palace fortress of Herod the Great and today an ongoing archeological dig; BETHLEHEM, including the cave where Jesus was born and Shepherds Field where the angels proclaimed the Good News (Matthew 1:18); MOUNT CAMEL, where God was victorious through His prophet Elijah over the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18); CAESAREA PHILIPPI, where Peter told the Lord, “You are the Christ” (Matthew 16); and The ARDENIT BAPTISMAL SITE, where the Jordan River exits the Sea of Galilee, and where we were baptized in the same waters of Jesus.*

*Suz and I had a great opportunity to dine with a Palestinian Christian family in their Bethlehem home. They introduced us to a different side of the story regarding conflicts between Arabs, Jews and other minority groups. Another time, another story, ...but, there was one conclusion our hosts instilled in us that night. Only the Arabs, Jews and minority groups who*

*LIVE THERE, and have this vested interest, can solve their problems. Outside interests/countries cannot. And, all parties must compromise to find solutions.*

*Well, we continued touring and our guide, Shraga, continued to be relentless with his information and perspectives. We visited: CAPERNAUM, the center of Jesus' ministry in the Galilee; The MOUNT OF BEATITUDES, where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7); The SEA OF GALILEE, where we sailed on a motorized boat slightly more modern than biblical times; a museum that had a fishing boat dug from the mud of the Galilee that is thought to be like Saint Peter's vessel, dated the same time-period; The CHURCH OF THE FISH AND THE LOAVES, where Jesus fed 5000; CANA, site of Jesus first miracle changing water to fine wine (John 2); SAMARIA, former capital of the Northern Kingdom of Ahab and Jezebel; and JACOB'S WELL where the Samaritan woman encountered Christ (John 4). This famous well of several millennium is 120 feet deep and is located in a beautiful Greek Orthodox Church having pristine grounds, priceless art, a surrounding high wall in the middle of a rather grimy, dusty city populated almost entirely by non-Christians.*

*Later on we traveled to the mountaintop fortress MASADA via cable car. High above the Dead Sea it was the last stronghold of the Jewish Rebellion against the Romans. The standoff was a heroic feat of superb leadership, keen planning, cohesive and dedicated purpose, and courage beyond measure.*

*Other places we visited included: JERICHO, the ancient city God conquered using Joshua as leader (Joshua 6:1); QUMRAN, where in recent times the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in caves; and the DEAD SEA, where I took the opportunity to float because it is so mineral laden. The Dead Sea is not refreshing like Lake Superior. The air temperature was 105 degrees and the sea was like bathwater. Floating was no trouble. Your legs surface immediately upon leaning back in the water. The surface of the Dead Sea is 1400 feet below sea level, the lowest place on earth!*

*And, ON TO JERUSALEM where we spent four days: The group stood on the MOUNT OF OLIVES and enjoyed a great view of the Golden City of Jerusalem. Jesus ascended into heaven from here (Acts 1:9). Then, we walked through the GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE and were encouraged to pray beneath the ancient olive trees as Jesus did (Matthew 26:36). We walked the streets of the OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM and encountered various sites including: SOUTHERN WALL EXCAVATIONS; WESTERN WALL; TEACHING STEPS, where oftentimes Jesus would teach and our group received a biblical reading and lesson; POOL OF BETHESDA, the healing pool (John 5:1); HEROD'S ANTONIA FORTRESS (Luke 23:1) where the chief priest brought Jesus to Pontius Pilate; Then we walked the "Way of the Cross", VIA DOLOROSA; and remembered the Lord's sacrificial love at*

*the CHURCH OF THE SEPULCHRE; and took communion as a group at the GARDEN TOMB commemorating in celebration of His Resurrection.*

*There are Holy Sites that left me wanting a more sacred display of what was represented. Such as the Church of the Nativity, the holy birthplace of Jesus. The lines are long and the pilgrims "pushy"; the temperature was unbearable, (for Minnesotans); the beauty of the Church was veiled by remodeling and scaffoldings to the ceiling; and most importantly, the depiction of the birthplace or crèche is less than sacred, in my opinion. The Church of the Nativity is what we oftentimes see from Bethlehem on TV Christmas Eve. Also, a few sites are not historic but are close facsimiles, in the geographical vicinity. But, some places we toured are truly the actual sites, such as the "Via Dolorosa", way of the cross and Jacob's well, the site where Jesus met the Samaritan woman.*

*So in the end what can I say about our modern day pilgrimage? The adventure was an eye-opener. The walk of the Lord was miraculous in ancient times and remains the same today. I am glad we made the trip.*



Modern Day Pilgrim Tom Perusse amazed by the ruins of Caesarea Philippi. Thanks Tom!

**Zoar Church, Tofte**

*A Place of Refuge, A Beacon of Hope, In Mission for Christ!*



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## Community Soup Suppers

Wednesdays at 5:30 PM

Come and grab a hot bowl of soup **Wednesday evenings!** Join fellow community members for a delicious meal, great conversation and a song or two! Everyone is welcome so please bring your friends and family. The soup is served from 5:30pm until 7pm. The meal is provided at no cost by friends and members of Zoar Church. Special Note: *The final Soup Supper will be held on Wednesday April 19th.*



Cooper listens to Dave play his guitar at the soup supper

## Easter Services

April 14 6:30 PM Good Friday  
April 16 9:30 AM Easter Service

Join us in celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus! The Good News Club will present *The Emmaus Road*, a short play about some of Jesus' disciples and the surprise they discover along the road to Emmaus at the beginning of the worship service. Pastor Daren's message, *A New Hope* is the culmination of this Lenten Season's series *The Questions Pilate Asked*. What is the "hope" that Jesus' death and resurrection offers us? How do Jesus' answers to Pilate's questions point us to hope in an uncertain world?

Weekly worship is on Sunday at 9:30am. Bible Study is on Thursday at 10:00am. At Bible Study we dive deeper into Sunday's topic.

- April 9 • Sunday Worship *Am I a Jew?*
- April 14 • Good Friday *Do you not know that I have power to release you?*
- April 16 • Easter Sunday *The Emmaus Road & A New Hope*

